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New York

Chairman: Mr. González ..... (Chile)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Jayanama (Thailand): As this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor, I should like to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman, and to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

It is unfortunate that, on the threshold of the new millennium, we, the international community, are still confronted by a wide spectrum of traditional and new challenges in the field of disarmament and international security. Traditional preoccupations about issues such as the massive accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear disarmament, have been coupled with new challenges and evolving security concerns such as anti-personnel landmines and small arms.

In this complex security environment we need to embrace a new comprehensive notion of security that addresses effectively these multifaceted challenges while placing the interests and welfare of people as the highest priority. Disarmament and international security must be approached from the perspective of providing human security.

The safety of people at risk is one of the most important elements of human security. In this connection, landmines pose a significant threat. We therefore attach high importance to addressing the problem of landmines in all its aspects. This requires a comprehensive approach. The removal of landmines is an important first step, but it is only part of the answer. It must be accompanied by increased attention to mine awareness, victim assistance programmes and long-term rehabilitation.

Thailand is committed to the Ottawa Convention, not only because many of our citizens are the victims of landmines, but also because we strongly believe in the humanitarian principles that are at the very core of the Convention. We are pleased to note that the Ottawa Convention has been signed by 135 States and ratified by 86, including Thailand. We urge remaining States to accede to the Convention and to join hands in this global effort to eliminate this weapon of terror that kills or maims individuals indiscriminately.

As part of our follow-up action to the Convention, we established the Thailand Mine Action Centre, which serves as the national focal point in mine action. Despite its limited resources, it has undertaken many activities to fulfil Thailand's obligations under the Convention. Training courses on demining and mine awareness programmes have been organized by the Centre. Tens of thousands of landmines in stockpiles have been destroyed.

Unfortunately, strong political will alone will not resolve the issue of landmines. It must be reinforced by adequate resources, financial assistance and technical support. We therefore call on all donor countries and international organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to provide the necessary support and assistance called for in article 6 of the Convention, to translate our political commitments into concrete action.

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Thailand has done, and will do, its part in cooperating with other countries, especially our neighbours, in demining.

Another important threat to human security comes from the expansion in the illicit production of and trafficking in small arms. The proliferation of these weapons has been a contributing factor to the rise in organized crime and other criminal activities. The relatively easy access to small arms by the general population has compounded the problem. The issue of small arms must therefore be tackled simultaneously along all fronts. Producer and consumer countries share the responsibility of reducing both the supply of, and demand for, arms in the world market.

Effective domestic legislation to control and regulate the production, use and sale of guns and other light weapons contributes to the suppression of crime and the promotion of internal law and order and peace and security. Thailand has supported all forms of international cooperation to resolve the problem of illicit transborder trafficking in guns, small arms and other light weapons. We therefore fully support the convening of the international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, in the year 2001, at a venue that will ensure the broadest participation at the highest level possible.

Our efforts to combat the problem of small arms and other conventional weapons should not divert our attention from the important issues of nuclear disarmament and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, where there has not been as much progress as we had hoped for.

Thailand still considers nuclear disarmament to be one of the top priority issues of international security. In this context, I should like to associate myself with the earlier Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) statement. We believe that the total elimination of existing nuclear weapons is the only way to create a safe environment, free from the spectre of the nuclear threat. The complete and universal implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are central to the nuclear disarmament process.

With the 2000 NPT Review Conference around the corner, we are disappointed that there has been little substantive outcome from the last three sessions of the NPT Preparatory Committee. We therefore hope that the States parties to the NPT will make use of the upcoming review conference to revitalize the process leading to the fulfilment of the principles and objectives set out by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

We deeply regret that, although the CTBT has been open for signature since 1996 and 154 countries have become signatories, the Treaty has still not entered into force. We appeal to all remaining States to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay, in particular those States whose accession to the Treaty is required for it to enter into force. We hope that the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), just concluded in Vienna, will regenerate momentum for the Treaty's early entry into force, in spite of the setbacks caused by recent developments.

While on the subject of disarmament, I should like to reiterate Thailand's unwavering support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world as a positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament. The establishment of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone is an important contribution to this goal. The Commission for that zone was established at the ASEAN ministerial meeting in Singapore this past July to oversee implementation and compliance with the Treaty provisions. The Executive Committee held its first meeting in Bangkok earlier this month to prepare the draft rules of procedure and initiate all necessary actions to ensure compliance with the Treaty, including consultations with the nuclear-weapon States and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other related bodies. We appreciate the readiness of China and the Russian Federation to accept in principle the Protocol to the Treaty that would enable nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Treaty. We hope that the other three nuclear-weapon States will follow suit.

Our preoccupation with global nuclear disarmament should not lessen our attention to other forms of weapons of mass destruction, particularly chemical weapons. They pose no less of a threat to mankind than nuclear weapons. Their so-called deterrent value is more than offset by the inherent dangers of accidents caused by improper stockpiling and by the inhumane suffering of victims from their use. We therefore call for universal accession to the Convention on Chemical Weapons (CWC) and adherence to its terms. For Thailand's part, we are on track to ratify the CWC by the middle of next year.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation of the useful work done by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. Thailand will

continue to participate actively in the Centre's activities and will support its present interim arrangement for the Director of the Centre to operate from United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Mr. Slabý (Czech Republic): First, I should like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and the other Bureau members on your election to your important posts. The Czech delegation wishes you, the Bureau, and all of us much success in carrying out our responsible work of drafting and examining draft resolutions related to disarmament, non-proliferation and the enhancement of international security. I can assure you, Sir, of our support and cooperation.

Though the Czech Republic has aligned itself with the European Union statement, I should like to briefly refer to my country's approach to some issues discussed at this forum.

One of the most important challenges facing the international community is undoubtedly the task of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, with the aim of achieving a complete ban on their use. Our ultimate objective has been and remains a world free of nuclear weapons.

In connection with the coming Review Conference of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to be held in 2000, we believe that prompt steps are needed to overcome a certain stagnation in negotiating treaties promoting nuclear non-proliferation and to resume a constructive approach to these talks, in particular on the part of nuclear-weapon States. Efforts should therefore focus on achieving clear, practical and realistic measures in nuclear disarmament in the next millennium.

With this in view, we regard the achievement of true universalization of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and speedy ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, so that it may enter into force, as being among the most imperative tasks of the day. In this light, we welcomed the ratification of the CTBT announced by France and the United Kingdom, but at the same time the Czech Republic regrets the decision of the United States Senate to reject ratification of the Treaty. We take into account President Clinton's pledge to abide by the Treaty's provisions, and we invite other countries which are about to ratify it to go on with the process. Resuming nuclear tests is not what the upcoming millennium needs at all. Therefore, the Czech Republic recalls the Final Declaration of the recent Vienna Conference of the CTBT States ratifiers and its call upon all States that have not yet ratified or even signed the Treaty to do so.

We are joining the international community in pushing forward on a START series. Early ratification of START II could have kicked off negotiations on START III, the outcome of which is expected to reduce arsenals by 80 per cent compared with the cold-war period. Also fissile material cut-off negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament, as envisaged in the principles and objectives document of 1995, could greatly contribute to speeding up the process of nuclear disarmament in all its aspects. Thus, the ad hoc committee on a fissile material cut-off treaty should be re-established during the very early stages of the 2000 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

We fully identify with those who describe as the potential four basic elements of nuclear peace and security the non-proliferation initiatives I have mentioned, including the NPT, the CTBT and the START Treaties, along with the cut-off treaty and the trilateral United States, Russian and International Atomic Energy (IAEA) initiative related to fissile military material, known as the plutonium disposition agreement and back-end nuclear fuel cycle final solution.

As far as the Chemical Weapons Convention is concerned, the world has taken a step forward in efforts for the elimination of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons and associated production facilities. That contributes to the gradual reduction of the threat of the use of these inhuman weapons and strengthens international and regional stability. Nevertheless, it is necessary, first, to recall that there are still many countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention and, secondly, to continue to support the efforts to achieve universalization of the Convention.

The Czech Republic also attaches great importance to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, in particular to an early and successful result of negotiations on the verification protocol. We appreciate the work of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of experts, and share his view that at its sixteenth session the Group made some progress on some issues -- for example, on the question of investigations. At the same time, we believe that at its seventeenth session, to be held in November-December 1999, the Group should advance as much as possible, in particular with the compliance measures, investigations, definitions, criteria and objectives, as well as the negotiation of article X. We support the efforts of the

European Union countries and other States to prepare the draft protocol in the first half of 2000 and thus to provide for its approval before the Fifth Review Conference.

The Czech Republic voices its support for all measures taken in the field of conventional weapons aimed at greater transparency. We have been consistently meeting our obligations concerning notification to the respective registers and supporting their extension to cover other kinds of weapons. The concern of the international community about illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons is fully shared and supported by the Czech Republic, which takes all necessary measures to prevent such activities.

We are part of the international efforts to remove anti-personnel landmines and totally ban their use. Recalling the statement of the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kavan, delivered in the General Assembly general debate, I should like to add that since its ratification of amended Protocol II to the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention (CCW) last year, the Czech Republic has completed the process of ratification of the so-called Ottawa Convention. The Czech delegation has been informed that tomorrow afternoon it will receive from Prague the instrument of ratification. Then the Czech Permanent Representative to the United Nations will deposit the instrument with the Secretary-General within a few days. We approach with full responsibility compliance with all commitments arising out of it, in particular with regard to the country's participation in international demining activities and assistance to mine victims, as well as the early destruction of existing stockpiles of mines. The true universality of the Convention is a *conditio sine qua non* in those efforts.

The Czech Republic has welcomed the enlargement of the membership of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament by another five countries. We sincerely congratulate them on this success. But at the same time we are of the opinion that the membership of the Conference on Disarmament may not be denied to other countries sincerely wishing and able to participate in its work. We are equally convinced that the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament membership will continue, and that the interest of countries striving for active involvement in the process of disarmament, including the Czech Republic, will be met. At the same time, we express the hope that the Conference on Disarmament will succeed in overcoming continued stagnation and in opening practical negotiations not only on the treaty on the complete ban on the manufacture of fissile material for military purposes, the FMCT, but also on other topical problems of arms control and disarmament, including nuclear weaponry and security safeguards for non-nuclear-weapon States.

The Czech Republic shares the hope that our joint efforts focused on disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, and on bringing first results in the solution of the question of the gradual elimination of weapons of mass destruction and certain conventional weapons, will be given a fresh and strong impetus at our present deliberations. We also share the hope that the stagnation of the disarmament process will be overcome and that another step forward will be made within this process towards a stabilized and peaceful world order.

Mr. Holum (United States of America): Let me join in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to preside over the final First Committee session of the millennium. My delegation pledges to support your efforts towards a productive session.

The approach of the new century is an opportune time to reflect on where we are and where we are headed. There is an ancient Chinese saying: "May you live in interesting times". At best that is a mixed blessing. But it is a fitting way to view the present and future of our arms control efforts.

Last year I spoke of the significant challenges facing the global arms control and non-proliferation regime and of the need to redouble our efforts to solidify gains and to move forward. An honest assessment of the past year is that, despite some real and disappointing setbacks, we did move ahead in reinforcing the consensus against proliferation. The United States continued to reduce its nuclear-weapon stockpile and to work with the Russian Federation and others to ensure that nuclear materials are safe and secure, to enhance transparency, to place excess fissile material stocks under international safeguards, and to transform — irreversibly — excess plutonium into forms unusable in nuclear weapons.

We have worked with others to build and strengthen the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Convention-implementing organization, and have worked in the United States to complete the process for United States industry declarations to the OPCW.

In September North Korea announced it was suspending its long-range missile tests and launch programme, in the context of a broad initiative developed by former Secretary of Defense, William Perry. Worldwide, efforts to discourage missile tests and exports

of destabilizing missiles and related technologies have intensified. Likewise, from the Nuclear Suppliers Group to the Australia Group, to the enhanced proliferation control initiative, the reach and breadth of efforts to discourage proliferation are expanding.

We have also seen progress in efforts to address the regional dimension of non-proliferation. The United Nations is negotiating a global protocol to deal with the dangers posed to civil society and regional stability by small arms, building on a similar Convention agreed by the Organization of American States. In South Asia, we and others have sustained efforts with both India and Pakistan to promote strategic restraint and adoption of the non-proliferation bench-marks outlined in Security Council resolution 1172 (1998). Recent political developments in the region make further progress even more essential.

In the Middle East an emerging climate of cooperation has opened up opportunities for progress on regional security issues. We have worked to cultivate this atmosphere and to discourage actions in multilateral forums that could undermine it.

So there is reason to be hopeful about the overall direction of arms control and non-proliferation. But events, including those recently in the United States, also show the hard work that lies ahead. Today I want to outline United States perspectives on key priorities before us in the coming year.

On 13 October the United States Senate voted against ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). This action was a deep disappointment to me personally as well as to others who have laboured in support of the CTBT. The outcome is clearly a setback, but the effort to bring the CTBT into force is not over. Indeed, President Clinton has made it clear repeatedly since the Senate vote that his efforts to secure ratification will continue. We will continue as well to urge others to ratify the Treaty, particularly those among the 44 required for entry into force. In the meantime, the President also made it clear that as we pursue ratification there will be no return to nuclear explosions. The United States will sustain the nuclear testing moratorium it has observed since 1992. In the too-brief Senate consideration, stockpile stewardship and verification were raised as concerns. Our programme is strong on the first and the Treaty is fully adequate on the second. Given time and experience, we believe the concerns can be resolved. The CTBT article XIV Conference earlier this month demonstrated once again that support of the international community for the CTBT remains a powerful force, one that will be sustained and cannot be ignored. We will complete the task of bringing the Treaty into force.

More broadly, it would be a profound error to conclude that my country's dedication to non-proliferation and arms control has flagged or, even worse, to take the Senate vote on CTBT ratification as reason for anyone else to stand back from that cause. For, after all, each of us takes non-proliferation and arms control steps not as a favour to someone else, or a lever for other ends, but as a matter of vital self-interest. It is for that reason that one of the most important United States priorities for the coming year will be to ensure that the 2000 NPT Review Conference reaffirms the Treaty as an essential part of the international security system. Over the three years it has met, the Preparatory Committee has given form to the concept of a strengthened review and helped define the key issues for the Review Conference.

The United States is looking forward to a constructive Review Conference, one that produces a balanced and thorough assessment of the Treaty. We recognize that there will be vigorous debate and that there will be differences of view on key issues, such as article VI and approaches to regional proliferation threats. Let there be no doubt, however, about the continued strong United States commitment to its article VI obligations. We believe that the NPT has served all its parties well. The challenge before us is to achieve further progress towards the goals of the NPT in the future. We need, however, to avoid extreme positions and to approach our work with a healthy sense of realism about what the NPT review process can achieve. Attaching unrealistic expectations to this process risks undermining the very regime we seek to strengthen.

Another key United States priority is to conclude negotiations on the protocol to the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The BWC is a linchpin of the global non-proliferation regime. We have been labouring in Geneva in the Ad Hoc Group for four years. The parameters of the protocol to strengthen the Convention are well established. Countries' positions have been discussed and debated at length, and their bottom lines — or red lines — have been made clear. The United States strongly believes the time is now to settle remaining core issues.

The United States recognizes that the multilateral arms control calendar is full and that staff resources for many countries will be stretched. But strengthening the BWC is far too important; we must not let this effort falter, especially when we are so close to finishing our work. I

urge all States to agree to schedule remaining sessions early in 2000 so that the negotiations can be completed next year.

Another initiative that has languished for far too long is the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). International consensus for a treaty was established in 1993, reinforced by the 1995 NPT Conference, and reiterated by the First Committee last year. Still we are marking time because Conference on Disarmament members cannot agree to a work programme. The United States strongly hopes that we can do so in January. Failure will threaten not only the achievement of an FMCT — an essential step towards nuclear disarmament — but the credibility of the Conference on Disarmament itself. The United States has supported the efforts of the President of the Conference on Disarmament to forge a work programme for next year. We are also pleased that Conference on Disarmament members are working between sessions towards that end. The United States has offered to be flexible in accommodating the views of others for a diverse work programme. We hope other countries will respond in kind so that FMCT negotiations finally can begin.

The START process remains at the top of our arms control agenda. The United States is strongly committed to furthering systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally. Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin agreed at their Summit in Cologne in June this year to begin discussions on START III and the ABM Treaty in late summer. I conducted the first such meetings with Russian officials in August, and further meetings are planned shortly. The United States is looking forward to Russia's ratification of START II even as we continue our discussions of START III to reach aggregate levels of 2,000 to 2,500 strategic nuclear warheads by December 2007, a cumulative reduction of 80 per cent from cold war peaks.

The ABM Treaty, a cornerstone of strategic stability, remains critical to preserve confidence on both sides in the stability of our respective strategic deterrent forces. The ABM Treaty remains fundamental to achieving our objectives for START II and START III and maintaining strategic nuclear cooperation efforts. The international environment has changed dramatically since 1972. The threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and advanced delivery means is real, it is growing and it is increasingly unpredictable. We are, accordingly, considering a limited capability to defend against rogue States' long-range missile threats.

We have amended the ABM Treaty before. We should be able to work cooperatively to amend the Treaty in a manner consistent with its original goals, to permit deployment of a limited national missile defence in a way that preserves the Treaty's essential purposes — that is, strategic stability and strategic offensive weapons reductions — while providing limited defences against rogue States' missile threats. A decision on whether to proceed with deployment will be made next summer, consistent with considerations of feasibility, threat, cost and arms control. Above all, we approach this issue with the objective of reinforcing strategic stability, promoting transparency and preserving security within a framework of continued cooperation with all countries on arms control matters.

A number of States have urged a "new agenda" in arms control, including a range of measures, old and new, taking us towards a world free from nuclear weapons. The United States recognizes the frustration that some countries feel about the pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament. We have made a serious and conscious effort to engage in discourse bilaterally, collectively in the NPT process, and in unofficial venues, on our approach to nuclear disarmament and our views on the best way forward. We have put on record, and will continue to do so, the many steps we have taken to support this process.

We consider ourselves part of the international consensus on nuclear disarmament. But there is no consensus on how best to attain that goal. There is also no agreement that the answer is a new agenda. I believe that reflects not a failure of the international community or a deficient commitment to disarmament, but, rather, the essence of the disarmament process. Progress to date confirms that disarmament is best achieved through practical, discrete, incremental steps, each building on its predecessors and each calibrated to the realities of the international security environment. Disarmament occurs not in isolation or upon demand, but as a result of a number of tangible factors: the commitment of States to the process; a stable security environment; effective verification regimes; and agreements that can be enforced.

The United States has maintained a fairly consistent perspective on the call for a new agenda. I suggest that the way forward is through not a new agenda, but a renewed agenda. We have before us today a broad arms control agenda awaiting completion. From the START process, to the Biological Weapons Convention protocol, to the fissile material production cut-off treaty, to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we have a full plate. Important

efforts are also under way to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to improve fissile material controls and transparency, to address small arms proliferation and to promote greater regional confidence-building measures. Listing the extensive array of efforts under way — unilateral, bilateral and multilateral — would take far longer than I have time for today.

Our problem is not too few items on the agenda; it is too little headway on those already there. Our collective problem is not insufficiently lofty goals, but insufficient collective willingness to grasp attainable ones. Certainly we should continue discussing the future arms control agenda. But let us also redouble our efforts to complete the current one. There is one road forward, and we cannot bypass its key milestones in our haste to reach our shared destination.

In the wake of the United States Senate action on the CTBT, some have questioned the United States commitment to arms control and non-proliferation and its credibility as a negotiating partner. To them I say "Do not let this delay in CTBT ratification mislead you about United States intentions". The United States commitment to arms control and non-proliferation is unwavering. The global community can count on the United States to continue to lead the fight against weapons of mass destruction and missile proliferation, and to work seriously and steadily to support effective and necessary arms control and non-proliferation agreements. Those who ask the United States Government to support and lead global non-proliferation efforts are pushing on an open door; the problem comes with the reality that at times what is behind that open door is a tall stairway that may take some time to climb.

As has been the case since arms control efforts began more than four decades ago, there will be a degree of unpredictability to the process. Arms control is not about instant gratification, but about patient, tenacious work. The long, strong history of arms control is proof that the results are worth it; this process like no other lends true meaning to the saying "Anything worth having is worth waiting for". We must not lose confidence in or sight of our ultimate objectives. At the same time, it is important to remain realistic about the constraints inherent in the process, to rein in frustrations and not allow the perfect to become the enemy of the good. For there are good arms control and non-proliferation efforts under way and more to come.

I began my statement noting that these are interesting times for arms control and non-proliferation. I believe that the coming year could also be a pivotal one in charting the future course. The United States looks forward to working with all members to ensure that as we prepare for tomorrow and the dawn of a new century we make the most of the opportunities before us today to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons, to reduce the risks of weapons of mass destruction and missile proliferation and to advance prospects for global peace and prosperity.

Mr. Bakhit (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I should like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee this year. We also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. We are certain that thanks to your well-known skills you will lead the Committee's work towards the expected results.

Sudan also wishes to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Mernier, for the excellent manner in which he chaired the work of the Committee last year.

Sudan, like the entire international community, is concerned about the current environment in international relations and international monitoring of armaments and disarmament. That concern has been reflected in most of the statements made by States since the Committee began its work. Therefore, I do not need to repeat here the various aspects of the failures in that field, failures which once again confirm the need to further deploy our efforts and to take practical steps in order to reach the noble goal to which all humanity aspires — to live in a world that enjoys peace, security and stability.

With the approach of the third millennium, we are quite convinced that nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction should be the priority of disarmament, in accordance with the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly held in 1978, as the most dangerous elements threatening mankind and human civilization. We reiterate here our regret over the failure of international efforts aimed at implementing all the commitments entered into in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We look forward to the 2000 NPT Review Conference to implement the objectives of that Treaty. We also hope that international efforts will be increased in order to reach consensus on an agenda and objectives for the fourth special session devoted to disarmament.

Sudan reiterates the need to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in order to achieve peace, stability and security. Based on our principles and our commitments we, together with the international family, have taken part in efforts to

save mankind from this scourge. Sudan has signed several international conventions in this area. We signed, for example, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In this area, we hope that the international community will make further efforts to finance demining activities and to establish a regime for their elimination, in accordance with a well-determined timetable, that will do away with them for ever.

Furthermore, Sudan, based on its commitment to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and to banning their production and development because of our foreign policy, which calls for the consolidation of peace, security and stability in the region, adhered to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, on 24 May this year. The Convention entered into force for Sudan on 23 June 1999. We have begun to adopt measures in order to implement the Convention at the national level, through the adoption of national legislation and the submission of chemical materials listed in the tables and related facilities to the regime in effect. We have also established a national body that manages activities pertaining to the implementation of the Convention and that serves as a focal point for contact with the Organization.

The continued current imbalance in international relations has been characterized by unilateral hegemony and double standards. This has had a negative impact on peace, stability and international security. American aggression against the Al-Shifa medical factory in Sudan last August under the pretext that this factory was producing chemical weapons was the most flagrant proof of this hegemony. These claims are not based on any scientific logic. The whole world has seen that the Al-Shifa factory simply produced pharmaceuticals for human beings and animals and that the United States committed a serious error in destroying it. The factory covered 70 per cent of Sudan's needs for medications for human beings and livestock, as testified by experts, consultants and Western engineers who worked in it.

Sudan has constantly transmitted factual information, reflected in American circles themselves, that confirms the erroneous nature of American claims and the mistake made in committing aggression against Sudan. We transmitted this information to the Security Council as the body responsible for preserving international peace and security. However, the United States has continued to impede the role of the Council in agreeing to Sudan's request for a fact-finding mission at a time when the United States has also failed to submit to the Council and to the international community any proof whatsoever that would give some validity to its claims.

The best known chemical weapons experts in America have examined the factory since the bombing to detect the truth. Samples were examined in the most advanced laboratories in Europe and the United States. The results were that this factory only produced medications for human beings and livestock.

Professor Thomas Tullius, Head of the Department of Chemistry at Boston University, who led a group of chemical and environmental experts from the United States to examine the factory stated that their objective was to find samples in a scrupulous and scientific manner in various sites and to analyse them in one of the most advanced laboratories in the world, which is specialized in this sphere. He said that the laboratory found that the samples did not contain, within the limits of scientific discovery, any EMPTA nor the other material called EMPA.

All the scientific studies by specialized bodies, including the Association of Sudanese Scientific Institutions, have determined that the Al-Shifa factory specialized in the production of medications and was not producing any chemical product that might pertain to the production of chemical weapons, neither the material EMPTA nor nerve gas, as was claimed by the United States.

Sudan attaches special importance to the question of the limitation of the proliferation of conventional weapons, as is the case with other African countries that are suffering from wars due to the flow of armaments to rebels. While we support the principle of limiting the traffic in conventional weapons and banning their use for the repression of human rights and fundamental freedoms in a way that might affect peace and security and destabilize the region, escalate regional conflicts, and encourage terrorism, we reaffirm our right to use conventional weapons to defend our borders and our unity, a right guaranteed by international law and international norms. In this regard, we appeal to other States to comply strictly with their commitments and specifically not to provide rebel movements with conventional weapons.

We share with the international community its concern about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In this regard, we appeal to the States that produce and export such weapons to take the necessary steps to prevent them from falling into hands other than those of legitimate Governments. Furthermore, Sudan welcomes international

efforts to hold an international conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in 2001. We stress that the conference should focus on the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. The proliferation of such arms does not of itself cause the outbreak of the conflicts where these arms are used. That is why we are convinced that a solution can be found by treating the very roots of the conflicts, which in most cases are due to the aftermath of the colonial era, the cold war and the continuing deterioration of the economic and social situation.

Sudan, like other members of the international community, believes that transparency in armaments is one way to strengthen international peace and security. We also reaffirm that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in its current state needs to be extended to cover information on weapons of mass destruction and sophisticated technology with military applications. Furthermore, the Register does not take into account the situation in the Middle East, where Israel continues to occupy Arab territories and to possess the most destructive weapons. Israel continues to be the only State in the region that is not a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Israel still refuses to heed the repeated appeals of the international community to adhere to the Treaty and to submit its nuclear installations to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Finally, we repeat that we are prepared to cooperate fully and to discuss all the items on the First Committee's agenda in order to reach decisions acceptable to all.

Mr. Basnet (Nepal): My delegation is very pleased to warmly congratulate you, Mr.Chairman, and all the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. We are convinced that the Committee's deliberations will be brought to a successful end under your able leadership, with your diplomatic skills and experience.

A number of events are overshadowing the Committee's current discussions. These developments are indeed presenting a formidable challenge to disarmament, which, in the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, is central to the task of preventing armed conflicts and creating a culture of prevention.

A cursory look at the recently released report (A/54/27) of the Conference on Disarmament reveals that the multilateral negotiating forum has once again failed to agree on an agenda for its work, despite efforts over the last three consecutive years. The hopes of concluding a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices seem to be dashed. Regrettably, there is no consensus among members of the Conference on Disarmament on this subject.

Moreover, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is delayed due to the lack of required ratifications, especially from the nuclear-capable States whose adherence is necessary to make the Treaty effective. However, we are encouraged by the renewed determination to promote the Treaty's early entry into force, as expressed in the declaration issued on 8 October 1999 at the end of the Vienna Conference convened under article XIV of the CTBT.

Last year's testing and development of long-range missiles and the development of missile defences have become worrisome. The strategic balance between the two States parties maintained by the current Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 requires to be preserved.

Disarmament agreements need to be concluded more urgently at a time of increased military expenditures fuelled by the greater frequency of intra-State conflicts. We fully subscribe to the view of the Secretary-General, expressed in his annual address to the General Assembly, that multilaterally negotiated norms should be observed. These norms, in our opinion too, are supportive of bilateral and multilateral disarmament and arms control negotiations.

The nuclear disarmament scenario is less than satisfactory. The nuclear impasse still exists. The three preparatory sessions for the forthcoming 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have hardly been successful. The latest, held this year, ended with just procedural agreements.

The threat posed by nuclear weapons to international peace and security is very serious. It is our earnest hope that all countries, the nuclear-weapon States in particular, will rise to the challenge and display the necessary political will to achieve general and complete disarmament, with the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The recent joint statement issued by the five permanent members of the Security Council, reiterating their commitment to article VI of the NPT, is noteworthy. This commitment needs to be translated into action to salvage the Treaty at a time when it is under the pressure of ongoing tests of ballistic missiles.

The issue of conventional weapons is no less important, in view of the frequent use of small arms and

light weapons in ongoing intra-State conflicts. It is unfortunate to note that rising military expenditures have been prompted by a growing number of local and ethnic conflicts. The heavy toll in human lives resulting from local conflicts has aroused awareness globally of the need to give serious consideration to checking the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Notwithstanding this, small arms, also referred to as weapons of personal destruction, have led to the devastation of civilian populations, followed by a worldwide humanitarian crisis. The development of these weapons has resulted in the impairment of economic and social progress. In light of the importance my delegation attaches to the question of small arms, we very much hope that organizational matters related to the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects will be decided at this year's session.

Let me shed some light on the useful work done by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which celebrated its tenth anniversary last year. By organizing regional seminars and meetings on various disarmament issues in which academic experts, government officials and members of civil society have participated, the Centre has made a valuable contribution towards promoting regional security dialogue. This dialogue, popularly known as the Kathmandu Process, has played a crucial role in raising awareness about security and disarmament issues among Member States in the region.

As in previous years, my delegation will take an active part in the formulation and presentation of an appropriate draft resolution on the Kathmandu Centre, in consultation with a number of countries which have co-sponsored it. It is our sincere hope that the draft will receive wider co-sponsorship and support from members of the Committee.

Despite some events with negative impacts on disarmament efforts, the world has witnessed some progress in some areas. Major achievements include the conclusion and operationalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Anti-personnel Landmines Convention — both accomplished in recent years. If chemical weapons and landmines can be stigmatized, there is no reason why the same cannot apply to nuclear weapons. What is needed is a sincere commitment from the international community, combined with a strong political will to outlaw nuclear weapons.

Mr. Westdal (Canada): I begin, Mr. Chairman, with congratulations to you and your Bureau. It is already clear that with you in the Chair we are in very good hands.

We gather this last millennial fall to talk and try together to write truth about security, the first subject on the human agenda; about survival, its first dimension; and about sparing future generations from the scourge of war, the first determination that we the peoples gave ourselves and this whole body 54 years ago.

The security of peoples is at the core of Canadian foreign policy — security for Canadians, of course, but indivisible global security as well, with determined action to promote human rights and development, to free people from fear and from want and, above all, to curb cruelty and protect innocents in armed conflict. We will do what we can to help them protect themselves, to make peace and keep it and to get on, just as well as they can, with their unique and precious human lives.

Canada's Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, said at the Assembly's opening last month that

> "it is we the peoples, all the world's people, whom we [representatives] are here to serve, not just [our] particular national interests." (*A/54/PV.10, p. 17*)

Minister Axworthy called for a

> "United Nations that places the safety of people at the centre of its agenda" (*ibid., p. 19*)

and said that

> "freedom from fear ... provides the United Nations with a clear, defining role at the century's close." (*ibid., p. 18*)

Minister Axworthy dealt in some depth with Canadian human security action, its resonance with the Secretary-General's report, launched during Canada's Security Council presidency in February and submitted last month, on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and its aim to build decisive support for such initiatives as an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to protect children in armed conflict.

States might survive nuclear war — in a manner of speaking — but human beings would not. The roots of our human security, our civilian protection and our arms control and disarmament policies are that closely entwined.

My Minister's speech culminated squarely in the middle of the Committee's mandate on two counts. First, he reminded us that the greatest threat to human safety

remains the possibility of nuclear annihilation and the hazards posed by other weapons of mass destruction. Secondly, he called for new meaning here in the United Nations. Well, new meaning is our stock-in-trade here; making it is our work, the value we add when we can in this and other Co mittees. We have no battalions here, but we are armed with truth, and in this Committee we are uniquely mandated to bring it to bear against the loss or desecration of human meaning, whether individually, life-sized, through cruelty or unnatural death, or as a whole intelligence through annihilation, the sure blasphemy of human extinction.

Each of us has unique security circumstances, and we each respond to them in our own ways. Canada's response includes membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), where we have long been committed to the allied protection and defence of our democracies; related security dialogue in regional groups, like the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, the Middle East peace process and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); and dialogue and action in multilateral security structures, from the Security Council to the NPT, from the campaign to ban landmines to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). However, for talk and truth about security issues, risks and prospects that we all share — and there are ominously many — we turn all together to the First Committee.

Security mandates need careful defining these days. Our Committee's mandate includes job one: survival itself. We cannot duck. Look at our agenda: nuclear weapons, a big-death item; other weapons of mass destruction, more of the same; and small arms and light weapons, the kind that are doing the mass of current killing. We are here to talk our way through our own particular thicket of acronyms, of course, but we must never forget the first reason the First Committee exists, never forget that we are here to face and talk and write truth about the grave risk of annihilation and about ways and means to avoid it.

I am getting on, past 50 now, but like most of us here I am still too young to remember what it was like before the stakes got this high, before the stopwatch started, too young to recall how it felt before we got all these blades to our throats.

Complaints are often voiced that the nuclear-weapon States avoid discussion of nuclear arms control and disarmament before the world community. Whether or not that is so, the sentiment in the complaint surely underscores the responsibility we all bear to take full advantage of the opportunities we do have to engage in such vital dialogue. In this Committee hard questions can be posed. They might not always get well answered, but that will not make them go away — and silence and evasion have their own eloquence. So for those with questions to pose and views to express on the critical issues before us, now is the time and this is the place.

It is sighed regularly that nuclear science cannot be unlearned, and particularly that nuclear weapons cannot be uninvented. Beware these banalities. For starters, given the known mortality of human civilizations, they are untrue. But, more, there is passive abdication in them, and their common implications are dead wrong. Nuclear arsenals capable of human extinction did not grow just like Topsy, inevitably, once we had split the atom, and they are not bound to stick around, inevitably. There is, and has always been, far, far less inevitability in the development and astronomically costly maintenance of nuclear-weapon arsenals than many vested interests, lazy or daunted analysts, and diverse, shallow Cassandras would have us believe; far, far less inevitability than they would dare to explore.

It did not have to end up this way, and though it has, it does not have to stay. And as we reject the passivity of inevitability and seek our way forward, hand-wringing about the hazards all around and relentless inquiries about whether we are there yet and just when we will be — like those from children in the rear seat on a car trip — are by and large unhelpful.

To win our fateful race with catastrophe we will need a healthy sense of our own great worth. We need to take ourselves very seriously. Our genius lends high-heaven grasp to our will these days. We finger the very tiller of our fate, bear even on the odds of our survival. We must all therefore insist that all of this gravity is all of our business. Some major-weapon Powers and their allies might like it otherwise, but only if nuclear weapons were none of our fate would they be none of our business.

It is true that some States and alliances have done much more than others to get us into this jam, and true that some States are very much more able than others to act to ge. s out of it. But it is also true that we are all in this together. To paraphrase a well-known rallying cry, whose principle is reflected in the obligations undertaken by all States parties to the NPT, no annihilation without representation.

Canadians' abiding concerns about survival and global security led Minister Axworthy to ask our Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade to consider these grave issues. Last December, after intense study and public debate, the Committee submitted a comprehensive report on nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, with a tell-all title, "Canada and the Nuclear Challenge: Reducing the Political Value of Nuclear Weapons for the Twenty-first Century".

In April this year my Government responded to the report with specific answers to questions and recommendations, and with a comprehensive policy blueprint which reaffirms Canada's long-standing commitment to comprehensive nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which elaborates policy to face the nuclear challenge, and which establishes Canadian priorities.

I will summarize the highlights of the Government's response; the full text is available in this room and on our Foreign Ministry's Web site.

The policy statement begins, as it must, with the NPT. It reaffirms our active commitment to its fulfilment, and recognizes that the Treaty is integral to our national security and vital to the security of future generations. Canada's objective has been and remains the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that that objective can only be achieved through the determined fulfilment of the Treaty and the treaties and agreements signed in its support. Universality is a major part of this goal — 187 countries have ratified the NPT; only Cuba, India, Israel and Pakistan have not. Canada will continue to urge them to sign and ratify the Treaty.

We were actively involved in the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, and we have since done our share to keep the promise of accountability that all members then made. At three Preparatory Committee sessions we have helped to launch the strengthened review process agreed in the extension decisions. The results have not been entirely satisfying, but there is no question that at Preparatory Committee sessions there have been more intensive reviews of members' fidelity since the Treaty was extended than there were before that was done — and we have only just started. We will keep working to ensure that next spring's NPT Review Conference will command a high political profile, reinforce the Treaty and restore momentum to its fulfilment.

The most important bilateral negotiations are of course those between the United States and the Russian Federation. In that context, Canada welcomed the joint statement their leaders made in June that they remained dedicated to strengthening strategic stability and international security; that they recognized the fundamental importance of the ABM Treaty; that they were getting START III talks going even before START II ratifications; and that, good news, agreed START I reductions will be achieved earlier than scheduled.

My Government's policy statement also endorsed measures to enhance the safety and security of nuclear arsenals and steps to sustain stability in strategic nuclear relations — steps like de-alerting and de-mating to build-in time for decision-makers and reduce pressures on them to use or lose their nuclear forces, or respond to unauthorized, accidental or contrived launch.

As we know well, strategic nuclear weapons are not by any means the only nuclear threat we face. There are many thousands of tactical nuclear weapons in the combined arsenals of Russia and the United States. Russia's reliance upon these weapons, deepened by deteriorating conventional forces, is a cause of particular concern. Canada encourages Russia and the United States to negotiate constraints on tactical weapons, such as a freeze on deployment, storage of all tactical weapons well away from and out of the control of operational units, basic data exchanges, verified dismantlement of systems and other incremental measures.

As Minister Axworthy reaffirmed in his address to the General Assembly last month, Canada considers the 1972 ABM Treaty signed between the United States and the Soviet Union to be fundamentally important in the maintenance of strategic stability. With respect to the potential deployment of a national missile defence system by the United States, Canada will want to determine the implications that deployment would have for strategic stability, specifically with respect to the ABM Treaty and other arms control and disarmament agreements, protocols and arrangements.

One step straight forward on the path to safety is the CTBT, a more effective obstacle to the qualitative development of nuclear weapons than all previous disarmament treaties. With 154 State signatories and 51 ratifications, including Canada's, the CTBT, though not yet in force, represents a formidable international consensus against nuclear test explosions.

But the international community will be better served by a treaty that has entered into force. That was the clear signal sent by the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in Vienna from 6 to 8 October. Failure to bring this about would be a serious blow to the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It is up to us all to work to preserve and advance the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament gains of the past 30 years, and it is deeply disturbing to see that the country that spearheaded many of those gains by championing this cause has now retreated from the battle to bring the landmark CTBT into force. Canada very much regrets the United States Senate's failure to ratify the CTBT, and we hope this decision will be reconsidered at an early date.

The continuing debate over the CTBT reflects opposing visions of how security can be best achieved in the post-cold-war world. The CTBT embodies the principle that multilateral cooperation is the best way to block proliferation, that concerted action by the international community most effectively serves the national interests of its constituent parts. The contrary approach is to reject multilateral undertakings and rely on one's own national means, to go it alone. An important part of our work to facilitate early entry into force is to demonstrate the superiority of cooperation over narrow self-reliance.

The next obvious step is to halt the production of fissile material for weapons or explosions. For 45 years now successive Canadian Governments have been actively promoting a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), and we want the Conference on Disarmament to get to hard work on this treaty from the start of its next session.

Our FMCT policy is spelt out clearly in our Government's statement. In the negotiations to come we will work to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament deals with both disarmament and arms control objectives, as regards the five nuclear-weapon States, and equally with non-proliferation, as regards those States which have remained outside the NPT regime. In our view, a treaty that puts an end for all time to the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons must be matched by parallel undertakings from nuclear-weapon States to establish effective mechanisms to reduce and eventually eliminate existing stockpiles of fissile material. Pending the conclusion of FMCT negotiations, Canada is promoting an immediate and universal moratorium on production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

This brings me to the situation prevailing in South Asia. The Government of Canada remains deeply concerned about the implications of the nuclear tests that were carried out by India and Pakistan last year. Those tests were a great setback for our cause, a setback that remains deeply disturbing. They violated the norm against nuclear proliferation agreed by the vast majority of States. They raised the spectre of an arms race in South Asia — a race that would not enhance, but, rather, would reduce the security of Indians and Pakistanis and their neighbours, while consuming vast resources desperately needed to ease the social and economic pain of so many in the region. Further, the tests may lead some nuclear-weapon-capable countries that have renounced such weapons to question the point of having done so, while threatening to retard further progress towards global disarmament.

Canada has joined and echoed the international community in calling upon India and Pakistan to take concrete steps to respect and fulfil Security Council resolution 1172 (1998); to freeze their nuclear-weapons programmes; to join us in banning tests and in negotiating an FMCT; to respect meanwhile a moratorium on the production of fissile material, and control exports of sensitive technology and materials; and to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States. This is a heartfelt exhortation, not at all an ultimatum.

Canada has found some encouragement in Pakistani and Indian statements since the tests that they intend to follow through on their earlier pledges to adhere to the CTBT. We are eager to see these pledges fulfilled. In this context, Canada notes with dismay the military coup in Pakistan, which adds an unwelcome element of instability to an already volatile situation.

Canada is one of 16 non-nuclear-weapon States represented in this room allied with nuclear-weapon States in NATO, the bulwark of our Euro-Atlantic democracies through the perilous nuclear stand-off of the cold war, and an alliance now in the course of continuing its adaptation — quite successful so far — to the current, altered and dynamic security needs of its members. As part of that adaptation, the summit of NATO leaders in Washington last April took two vital steps forward. First, they recognized in the Washington Summit Communiqué that international arms control and disarmament arrangements contribute to alliance security and that alliance members should work together to further advance these arrangements. Secondly, they acknowledged the diminished salience of nuclear weapons, and agreed that the Alliance would consider options for confidence- and security-building measures,

verification, non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. This December NATO's Council will propose a process to Foreign Ministers for considering such options.

While the use of nuclear arsenals is the most serious potential threat to human security, it is by no means alone. As part of our comprehensive approach to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, we are therefore active in many international settings, working not only to prevent the further spread of chemical and biological weapons and missiles, but also to roll back existing programmes.

Canada continues to encourage universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Though adherence to the Convention is widespread, problem areas remain. Of greatest concern is the Middle East, where Libya, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq are not yet States parties. We recognize the complexities of Middle East security challenges, and we strongly believe that ratification of the CWC would enhance stability in the region. Canada has given advice and assistance to a number of countries on how to implement and administer the Convention domestically. We have shared draft legislation and declaration software, and we have provided experts on the Convention and on export and import controls for regional and national seminars. We will sustain these efforts to promote adherence to the Convention.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, unlike the Chemical Weapons Convention, does not yet include verification provisions. As our experience with Iraq has demonstrated, advances in biotechnology and the spread of knowledge and technology make biological weapons capability more readily achievable by an increasing number of countries. Many technologies used legitimately in research, health and commerce can be used in weapons programmes. Clearly, new measures to verify the prohibition of biological weapons are urgently required. We find it strange that those who were most vociferous on the need for any convention to be verifiable are now blocking efforts to achieve that goal.

Working with States from north and south, Canada is committed to the ongoing negotiation of a compliance protocol to reduce the threat posed by covert biological weapons programmes without imposing an unacceptable burden on industry. We want facilities engaged in defence against biological weapons to be declared, along with those that could be used to produce them. As well, we seek provisions for transparency, access and visits to build confidence in compliance and for challenge investigations when there is serious concern that the Convention has been violated.

The Committee is also concerned with conventional arms, including anti-personnel landmines and small arms and light weapons, the agents of the mass of the killing these days.

We hear often that progress in non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament depends on political will. We ought to remember, then, that political will depends in turn — and not only in democracies — on public concern and opinion. Seldom have these dependencies been clearer than they were in the achievement of the Ottawa Convention to ban anti-personnel landmines.

Five years ago that issue languished in the Conference on Disarmament, with scant progress in prospect. As of today, 135 countries have forsworn the use of anti-personnel landmines, including all but two of the countries of the Americas, most of Europe and Africa and much of Asia. Eighty-seven countries have also ratified the Convention, 21 more than there are members of the Conference on Disarmament. The number of mine victims in some of the world's most severely affected countries is declining. The once flourishing trade in anti-personnel landmines has all but vanished. There are fewer than 10 mine-producing countries in the world that do not support a comprehensive moratorium or a de facto ban on the export of anti-personnel mines. Further, since 1996, when the Ottawa process began, 20 countries have destroyed more than 14 million stockpiled mines. These mines will never take a life or a limb.

These deeply encouraging achievements notwithstanding, we must recognize that since the Convention's entry into force in March 1999 anti-personnel landmines have been used in Kosovo and Angola. As well, major Powers — the United States, Russia and China — have yet to sign the Convention. We urge them to do so. We also encourage the international community to devote more resources to demining programmes.

In his address to the General Assembly last month my Foreign Minister said that a focus on the human costs was the impetus behind efforts to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and spoke of their use in conflict zones or on neighbourhood streets, which exacts an alarming human price. Indeed, as Secretary-General Annan has observed, the most prolific killer in the world today is a 14-year-old with an AK-47.

Civilians constitute the vast majority of all casualties in current armed conflict. More than a million lives are lost every year in these conflicts — 90 per cent of which employ small arms and light weapons — and the toll has been rising. Yet there is still a huge and eagerly supplied market for these weapons. Protecting civilians is literally impossible without stemming the flow of such arms. Canada thus welcomes the Secretary-General's report (S/1999/957) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and will press for the implementation of the tough new measures he proposes.

But we cannot stop there. We need to think comprehensively and systematically of new ways to contend with the growing threat of small arms. That is why Canada strongly supports the convening of a conference on the illicit trade in small arms in 2001. That conference must take a comprehensive approach, tackling the issue of proliferation in all its aspects — arms control, law enforcement and peace-building. We cannot meanwhile be idle; the need for action is too urgent. We see the conference in 2001 as a chance to take stock of results and plan the way forward, but to get results we need to start now.

A comprehensive approach is needed, one that will impose greater controls on supplier States, address the social and economic factors that make small arms and light weapons such a valuable commodity in poorer societies and provide adequate resources and training for more effective border control, policing and weapons destruction. Such action will only be effective, though, if it is matched by community-based reconciliation and development programmes that reduce the cultural, social and economic significance of possessing a weapon in the first place.

We also need to take advantage of existing political and legal instruments. The Organization of American States (OAS) now has a convention in place, as does the European Union. Canada would like to see the European Union Code of Conduct and Joint Action on Small Arms multilateralized to serve as the possible foundation for a politically binding instrument.

Non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament are universal objectives. That is why Canada, while sharing the international community's desire to preserve and protect current economic and security benefits from the use of outer space, wants to avoid its weaponization and the new costly arms race that that would entail. We have therefore actively promoted the establishment of an ad hoc committee within the Conference on Disarmament to address arms control and disarmament issues relevant to outer space. We have also proposed that a convention for the non-weaponization of outer space be the prime negotiating objective for such a committee.

Our concern is not academic. More than 30 States are engaged in space, and many more are moving in that direction. Technology continues to evolve as well, and, as the most cursory review of public information reveals, major resources are being devoted to research concepts and to specific projects for extensive, far-reaching military use of outer space.

Canada thinks that now is the time to act to preserve outer space as a sanctuary, an environment without weapons. We recognize that outer space is already being heavily used, not only for civilian purposes, but also for military purposes such as surveillance, intelligence-gathering and communications. We do not propose to roll back that reality. But we do want to preclude weaponization today, rather than be forced at great cost tomorrow to contend with it, to contain it and, late in the game as usual, to try to reverse it.

An important related objective that Canada would want addressed is the establishment of an international system to provide notification of intended missile launches. We have thus encouraged the United States and Russia to consider multilateralizing the agreement they announced at their September 1998 summit in Moscow to establish a joint United States-Russia missile early warning centre. We should also look at ways of associating more States with the limitations of the Missile Technology Control Regime, perhaps through guidelines or a politically binding statement.

Finally, I address the future of the Conference on Disarmament, where lost momentum is proving hard to regain and inertia counters our best intentions. An institution with a critical mandate but no work plan is no credit to the international community. Endless linkages produce nothing but deadlock.

Canada does not believe that the inability to make substantive progress during the past year signals the collapse of the Conference on Disarmament. Further, it is simplistic, in our view, to blame the paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament on its structures and working methods. That said, we see urgent need to mobilize the political will and the creativity necessary to put the world's only standing multilateral disarmament negotiating forum back to work.

Canada wants an ad hoc committee established in the Conference on Disarmament to address the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We also want substantive discussion there of nuclear disarmament, and we support the establishment of an ad hoc committee to that end. Canada acknowledges that it is the responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States themselves to negotiate nuclear weapons reductions. None of us, though, is without abiding concern about their progress. A Conference on Disarmament ad hoc committee to discuss nuclear disarmament issues would respect that concern, respond to the broad international yearning for nuclear-weapon States' arms control and disarmament, and encourage those States to press forward. We should take all this very personally. Our work, after all, is to get safer, worthier nuclear-weapon choices willed and made.

That boy the Secretary-General spoke about, the 14-year-old with an AK-47, shares the human predicament. He is packing a whole lot more power than he knows how to handle, and he is going to have to be lucky to get to grow up. We are packing the binding power of the universe, and we might not get to grow up much more either.

We have put the fateful facts we learned a half century ago to work for life, and we have put them as well to work for death, big-time. We have erred and strayed from safety. Among us, powerful States have within memory lost their tempers entirely and fought to the death by any and all means. There is this darkness in us that it could happen again. But there is also light and health in us. Like all meaning, we are bound too, not by chance, but by truth. With nature as it is, real truth is on our side, and it will light our path and see us safely through.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, it gives me pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee in this year, which constitutes a dividing line between two millenniums. We are confident that with your experience and efficiency you will lead the work of the Committee to success. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Second, a quick review of what has been achieved in the field of disarmament since the establishment of the United Nations leads us to the conclusion that it is far less than we had aspired to. For humanity today is more threatened than ever before with the dangers of a nuclear holocaust.

The objective included in resolution 1 (I) at the first session of the General Assembly in 1946, namely, nuclear disarmament, still eludes us. Despite the rise of hopes after the end of the cold war of halting the nuclear arms race, what has happened is quite the contrary. The collapse of the socialist camp gave the United States a feeling of absolute hegemony over the world. That in turn prompted it to depend increasingly on the principle of nuclear deterrence, policies of power, military intervention, expansion of alliances and pacts, and the development of its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Once again the doctrine of the first use of nuclear weapons has re-emerged.

Third, among examples of the policy of brute force adopted by the United States, with the help of Britain, are the imposition of no-fly zones in the north and south of Iraq and the bombing of civilian centres in Iraq, continuously and periodically since 1991, and daily since 16 December 1998. This represents but one example of force being used in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and international law in a way that seriously threatens international and regional peace and security.

Fourth, the United States and Britain used more than 300 tonnes of depleted uranium in their aggression against Iraq in 1991. They repeated that use against Yugoslavia in 1999. The use of radiological weapons against Iraq led to an excessive increase in cases of cancer, depression, nervous breakdowns, genetic deformations and deformed babies amongst civilians, particularly in the southern provinces of Iraq, where such weapons were used — and that in addition to its effects on American and British soldiers. The United States Veterans Affairs Department conducted a study on 251 families of those afflicted with the Gulf War syndrome in Mississippi State, and it showed that after the war 67 per cent of them had babies that were greatly deformed. The Baltimore Medical Center also found a high level of radiation in the urine of American soldiers five years after the Gulf War.

The catastrophic dimensions of the use of depleted uranium on the environment and on human beings in Iraq and other neighbouring countries will continue for generations to come, because it transformed a large part of the territories of Iraq into a contaminated and radiologically active environment. We call upon competent international organizations and the countries of the world to give this issue the necessary attention and to take appropriate action to help clear the environment of Iraq of the radiological effects of the use of this weapon. We also call for the

conclusion of a binding international convention banning the use of depleted uranium in making weapons.

Fifth, while concerted efforts are made by the international community to coordinate services aimed at the useful exploration and use of outer space, including the efforts of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, we are concerned about news of America's intention to deploy a new missile defence system that includes the use of satellites for military purposes and for preventing others from using outer space for purposes that run counter to American interests.

The American project for the militarization of outer space contravenes the obligations of the United States under international and bilateral conventions, including the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, and the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the ABM Treaty. This is an additional step in the policies of the arrogance of power that will lead to a further expansion of the arms race.

Sixth, the credibility of the United Nations in regard to verification was dealt a fierce blow during this decade. Recent facts, including statements by American officials and by inspectors of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), showed that this Commission was being used by the United States and Israel to spy on Iraq, to create crises and to conspire against Iraq and its leadership. The former Chairman of UNSCOM, Richard Butler, prepared and submitted his report to the Security Council on 15 December 1998 in coordination with high officials of the United States and in a way that runs counter to facts and realities on the ground, in order to provide justification for the United States and Britain to launch an armed aggression against Iraq on 16 December 1998.

Mr. Bakhit (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Regrettably, despite the admission by the United Nations Secretary-General in his statement of 27 June 1999 that the accusations levelled at the inspectors of UNSCOM to the effect that they were spying for the United States were partially true, the United Nations has not yet initiated any investigation into this issue, nor has it taken any action to hold accountable those who used its name to undertake spying and aggressive activities and to mar its reputation.

Seventh, we welcome the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament, but we are quite concerned that it did not make any substantive progress in adopting its programme of work for the 1999 session, despite the flexibility shown by the Group of 21. We hope that at the beginning of its next session the Conference will reach a consensus on defining the mandate of the ad hoc committees concerned with nuclear disarmament and the cut-off in the production of fissile materials and the destruction of their stockpiles.

Eighth, while we are of the view that it is important to rid humanity of weapons of mass destruction, we find it appropriate to recall that the number of Iraqi civilians killed by sanctions imposed against Iraq since 6 August 1990 exceeds the number of all victims of the use of weapons of mass destruction in the world. It is no surprise, then, that the party that first used nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is the same party that is using sanctions as a weapon of genocide against Iraq.

Ninth, the world received with dismay the news that the United States would not accede to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was custom-made to suit the purposes of the United States. We in the Arab region regard this position not only as persistence by the United States in continuing its military doctrine that is based on absolute nuclear supremacy, but also as encouragement to Israel to continue its acquisition and development of nuclear weapons, taking into account the close nuclear cooperation between the United States and Israel and Israeli infiltration of the research and military institutions of the United States.

Tenth, our Arab region suffers from a huge imbalance in the strategic balance of weapons. The occupying Israeli entity acquires all types of weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear weapons. Evidence of that is the El Al flight incident at Amsterdam Airport in 1992. *The Times* of London on 9 October 1999 carried news about the existence of a secret document issued by the United States Department of Energy to the effect that Israel owns about 300-500 kg of plutonium used in the production of nuclear weapons. That quantity is large enough to produce 250 nuclear warheads at least, which means that Israel ranks as number six among nuclear-weapon States.

The acquisition by Israel of weapons of mass destruction is concomitant with its expansionist policy at the expense of Arab territories in a way that seriously threatens the region. Iraq, as a member of the Arab League, reaffirms the provisions of the various resolutions of the Council of the Arab League to this effect. Those resolutions include the statement that security and stability in the Middle East require the elimination of all weapons of

mass destruction through turning the Middle East into a zone free from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, in accordance with paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The Council of the Arab League also states that the fact that the Israeli nuclear programme is still outside the system of non-proliferation and that Israel continues to refuse to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and place its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime represents a threat to Arab national security and undermines the credibility and universality of the NPT. The perpetuation of the status quo, under which all States of the region, with the exception of Israel, are committed to the non-proliferation regime, represents a serious imbalance threatening the peace and stability of the region and cannot be accepted.

In addition, the Council calls upon the Security Council, which is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, to ensure universal application of all provisions concerning the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, without using double standards, to take necessary actions to achieve this objective under the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, and to ensure effective and comprehensive security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Eleventh, General Assembly resolutions, the most recent being resolution 53/74, reaffirm the need to take necessary measures concerning the banning of military attacks on nuclear facilities. We believe that there is an urgent need to hold a binding international convention banning such attacks. The precedent by which Israel in 1981 destroyed with impunity the Iraqi nuclear reactor used for peaceful purposes, should prompt the international community to think seriously about this objective.

Twelfth, we share the concern expressed by some countries concerning the exaggerated emphasis on small arms, in particular, and conventional weapons in general. We stress the necessity to distinguish between the need for weapons for self-defence and the illegal transfer of weapons. We also note that 10 of the countries of the north produce 90 per cent of the weapons in the world, and that the United States alone produces half of the world's output of conventional weapons and is the world's biggest exporter of weapons.

Thirteenth, and finally, I will not be over-optimistic and state that the international and regional efforts to achieve disarmament and arms control will lead to optimism and hope, because that may give the wrong message to those who believe that they are distracting the attention of the international community with the issue of small arms and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, while they are developing their huge arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. This may also give the wrong message to future generations.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons represents a threat to humanity as a whole. Their use will lead to grave consequences for humanity in general. Let us put the interests of humanity before the narrow interests of one international party or another. Let us continue to pursue the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as is clearly indicated by the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, dated 8 July 1996, constitutes a legal and moral basis on which we can build in this connection.

Mr. Fils-Aimé (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): At the beginning of 1966, after secret overtures from the White House to the Soviets at the end of 1965, in the hope of limiting the anti-ballistic missile arms race, President Lyndon B. Johnson wrote to the Soviet Premier, Mr. Kosygin:

> "I think you must realize that following the deployment by you of an anti-ballistic missile system, I face great pressures from members of Congress and public opinion not only to deploy defensive systems in this country, but also to increase greatly our capabilities to penetrate any defensive system which you might establish. If we should feel compelled to make such major increases in our strategic weapons capabilities, I have no doubt that you would in turn feel under compulsion to do likewise. We would thus have incurred on both sides colossal costs without substantially enhancing the security of our own peoples." (*Coping with International Conflict, pp. 97-98*)

Just like Mr. Johnson, a good number of leaders on the international scene held, and still hold, that view. Therefore, it is not vision that is lacking, but, rather, the political will to make that vision a reality.

The world is no longer doomed to the straitjacket of the cold war. The East-West iron curtain is no longer a part of the international scene, but the cold-war mentality still persists today. The doctrine of nuclear deterrence, which means not allowing oneself to be outpaced by the other side's technological innovations, but achieving decisive superiority instead, is still alive and well. This balance of terror, once created by a nuclear Power to exhaust a rival Power, is still in effect and still serves as an instrument of blackmail in order to teach others a lesson, in particular, third-world States.

To understand that the post-cold-war world has not really changed very much it is enough to take a look at the continued differences of view in matters of nuclear disarmament and the impasse created by that frame of mind, if not of belligerence then at least of distrust during disarmament negotiations. The entry into force of the START II Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation is still pending; negotiations on START III announced last June have not yet begun; the Conference on Disarmament ended its annual session without even adopting a programme of work; negotiations on a convention to ban fissile materials for military purposes have not been successful; a consensus on the objectives of the fourth special session devoted to disarmament has not yet been found; the Treaty of Pelindaba, for an African nuclear-weapon-free zone, is making no progress, and humankind is questioning the political will of the nuclear Powers regarding the Treaty to implement article VI of the NPT.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which has been open for signature since 24 September 1996, has had only 26 of the 44 ratifications required for its entry into force. It should also be mentioned that the United States, China and the Russian Federation are not among the countries that have ratified it. We are all now aware of what happened to the CTBT Treaty last week on Capitol Hill. The Ambassador of the United States in his statement today pointed this out himself and said reassuring things.

My delegation is among those which believe that authority is above all moral authority. Therefore, it wonders to what extent we can in good conscience encourage States such as India, Pakistan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from continuing their nuclear testing. That having been said, members will understand why a large number of delegations have used this debate to emphasize the unequal nature of the international regime; quite rightly, they have deduced that the nuclear Powers are, in the final analysis, attached to their doctrine of deterrence and seem to be much more interested in depriving them of the prospect of a nuclear arsenal rather than building a world where no city would have to suffer the same fate as Hiroshima and Nagasaki suffered in August 1945.

As for the question of missiles, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, to whom my delegation would like to pay a well-deserved tribute for the statement he made on 11 October, warned against the deployment of anti-missile defence systems. Such a practice he said would mean that the international community had lost yet another cornerstone on which the building of disarmament rests, to wit the prevention of an arms race in space. In this regard we share the concerns of Member States in the face of the challenges to the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America (ABM Treaty) signed in 1972.

My delegation will not dwell at great length on these issues of importance, because it fully subscribes to the statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Caribbean Community, of which my country is a member. However, it wishes to join so many others in expressing its regret over the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Even though these arms do not have the capacity for atomic destruction, they constitute the real instruments used by criminals, drug traffickers and terrorists. In Port-au-Prince and in other cities and provinces of Haiti, despite the efforts of the new national police force, one can hardly talk about lasting security, because of the actions of bandits possessing such weapons, whom the Haitian authorities cannot always track down in order to bring them to justice. The sister of President René Preval was the victim of an attack; a senator was assassinated; a former colonel was shot down in cold blood on 8 October; and the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) has reported that 10 police officers were killed at the beginning of the year and four police were murdered only two weeks ago. Furthermore, large numbers of members of civil society have lost their lives because of this state of insecurity.

Organized crime has never contributed to a country's socio-economic development. To the contrary, it stokes civil wars, fosters the exodus of citizens, destabilizes the structures of a young democracy and discourages people from investing capital. These may be small arms and light weapons, but the harm they can do to a region or an entire nation can be great. According to statistics published by the

Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands, approximately 90 per cent of the victims of recent wars were killed by such weapons. Ninety per cent of these victims were civilians. With a total since 1987 of 2 million children killed, 4.5 million handicapped, 1 million becoming orphans and 12 million displaced, it can be seen that these so-called small arms can annihilate an entire tribe, an entire ethnic group, an entire minority. These instruments of death, which can be obtained illegally for just a fistful of dollars, are one of the biggest concerns for my Government.

In this connection, my delegation encourages the initiatives of countries such as Canada and Switzerland, which are trying to establish universally applicable techniques for marking weapons, with the active participation of the armaments industry. It also notes the second seminar organized last June by Switzerland and Germany to combat the proliferation of and illicit trade in these fearsome devices. My delegation also welcomes the joint efforts of the members of the international community that have understood the importance of organizing at the regional level. In this connection, we commend the steps taken by the Organization of American States (OAS), which, pursuant to its June 1999 resolution, continues to exhort member States to ratify without delay the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of, and Trafficking In, Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, which was signed in November 1997 and entered into force in July 1998.

In this context, Haiti supports the holding of the international conference on the illicit arms trade planned for no later than 2001, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/77 E. It hopes that everything will be done to make that conference one of the best, not just in terms of proposals and draft resolutions to be adopted, but also in terms of concrete measures to be implemented. In this regard, my delegation endorses the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Exports in its report (A/54/332), and will spare no effort to find a remedy to this ill, which spreads terror and destabilizes the very bases of our societies.

Man is an animal, but a reasonable animal. He has been given intelligence, will and sensibilities. He showed his courage in Ottawa on 1 March, when he ensured the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. He proved in Maputo last May, during the First Meeting of the States Parties to that Convention, that he was ingenious enough to put his plan of action into effect.

Unless the same type of concerted action is taken with regard to "ABC" — atomic, biological and chemical — weapons, the United Nations will remain a talking-shop regarding the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. As long as we give weight to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence or the so-called principle of self-defence, much ink will flow, but the foundations of arsenals will not be destroyed. To some extent the adage "Let him who desires peace prepare for war" is understandable, but we should be careful not to arm in such way as to destroy the planet, the common heritage of mankind. If one knows that being quickest on the draw risks, by the same token, causing an escalation so extreme that there will be no winners, but only losers, how can weapons of mass destruction really be necessary tools for international peace and security? If one knows that in plunging into an apocalyptic war one runs the risk of self-destruction, what is the basis of this political and military strategy?

In the final analysis, in view of their common aspirations, States have a greater interest in building for themselves systems of cooperation than in creating a climate of mutual mistrust taking us to the abyss; this is dictated by common sense and logic. There is no point in devoting exorbitant sums to making and stockpiling arms that one promises not to be the first to use, when those funds could be allocated to social development, education and health services. National and international peace and security are not necessarily based on missiles, bombs or any other type of deterrent weapon. They are also inextricably linked to societies' levels of poverty and unemployment, and to their levels of training — in other words, to their social and economic conditions.

In this world following the East-West order, he who wants peace may also prepare for peace, and that means creating a culture of peace. As the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) says so well,

> "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

Mr. Forner-Roviru (Andorra): Allow me first, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Andorra is one of the first examples of a demilitarized territory in Europe, formed in 1278 out of a pact of peace that required all castles to be destroyed. This measure may seem simple now, but its philosophy can still be applied in

the present situation, in which many countries are still spending large amounts to build up their arsenals. The destruction of weapons of all kinds, weapons initially conceived to kill human beings, would be perhaps the best way to contribute to international peace and stability.

The Principality of Andorra since it became a Member of this Organization in 1993 has been striving to adhere to some multilateral treaties on disarmament. I will briefly inform the Committee of our achievements in that field.

During 1996 Andorra deposited the three instruments of adhesion to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). That same year, on 24 September, the President of our Government signed, in New York, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is due for ratification in the course of this parliamentary session. We urge all countries to follow the same path.

Andorra also signed in 1997 the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The instrument of ratification was deposited in June 1998. We are happy to see that on 1 March this year the Convention finally entered into force. This fact only reaffirms our strong belief that when there is a sincere will there is a real outcome.

Other international treaties, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, are presently under study and will enter the legislative calendar as soon as possible. Indeed, in spite of the large amount of resources that the adoption of a treaty entails for Andorra, priority has been given, as a matter of principle, to our participation in international instruments on disarmament.

The Principality of Andorra throughout these years has also explored other ways of participating in the work of the Organization that substantially improve the well-being of mankind. In this regard, we were one of the countries that contributed, according to our means, to the pilot project on weapons in exchange for development in the Gramsh district of Albania, organized by the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project aims to bring about the collection and destruction of weapons in that region through offering certain development incentives to the civilian population in return for the voluntary surrender of weapons.

Andorra also sponsored the exhibit "Taking aim at small arms: defending children's rights" produced by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, which can still be seen at UNICEF House until December. We encourage those representatives with an interest in the subject to make the necessary arrangements to take it to their countries. We believe that, to quote Archbishop Desmond Tutu,

> "it is immoral that adults should want children to fight their wars for them."

There is simply no defence, argument or excuse that might justify the use of children in armed conflicts, and we sincerely hope that all initiatives related to this issue and submitted to the Third Committee will improve the present situation. We need to show our children of today, who will be the leaders of tomorrow, the pain and suffering that armed conflicts inflict on young people. They might be able to avoid our mistakes and build a better world to live in.

This year, as in previous years, we will fully participate in the work of the First Committee. A small country like ours, which has no weapons of any class and does not spend a penny of its budget on armaments, must have a confident and positive attitude towards the process of the elimination of nuclear weapons and general and complete disarmament. No matter how long it takes to reach our ultimate goal, we must get there if we believe we have a future.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): On behalf of the Pakistan delegation, I should like to felicitate the Chairman and all the other members of the Bureau on their election.

This century has witnessed the most horrible blood-letting by increasingly infernal machines of war, ultimately with the ultimate weapon — the atomic bomb. It has also witnessed the most concerted endeavours for the negotiated control, reduction and elimination of arms.

The cold war saw over 40 years of an incessant nuclear and conventional arms race, mainly between the Western and Eastern ideological blocs, when the danger of a nuclear holocaust was clear and present. Peoples around the world entertained the hope that the end of the cold war would ensure genuine progress towards the agreed goals of nuclear disarmament and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, the abolition of other weapons of mass destruction, and the control and reduction, globally and regionally, of conventional weapons and armed forces.

But despite the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the window of opportunity to achieve global disarmament and to strengthen international peace and security may be rapidly closing. During this decade, wars and conflicts have proliferated, and the progress made towards disarmament has been partial and is now in danger of being reversed. The reasons for this reversal are complex, but the increasing concentration of power after the cold war ended, and the inevitable resistance to this asymmetry in strength, are major factors in the regression witnessed in international relations.

This last year of the millennium has witnessed several negative developments: first, the erosion of mutual trust and confidence between some of the major Powers in the context of the Kosovo conflict; second, the adoption of the new strategic doctrine by the Western Alliance envisaging "out of area" actions and the threat of nuclear-weapons use, including against non-nuclear-weapon States; third, the failure of one major Power to ratify the START II agreement; fourth, moves for the amendment or abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which could revive the nuclear arms race between the major Powers; fifth, the announcement of a draft nuclear doctrine by a new nuclear Power, envisaging the operational deployment of a huge arsenal of land-, air- and sea-based nuclear weapons which could generate further nuclear and conventional arms escalation in South Asia and beyond; and, sixth, the rejection of the CTBT by the legislature of the Treaty's main sponsor.

Concern about the demise of disarmament is therefore quite legitimate. The quest for a monopoly of security and the application of double standards in arms control are unacceptable. As the American General, Omar Bradley, said during the cold war,

> "We live in an age of nuclear giants and ethical infants, a world that has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience."

In the present adverse international environment it is hardly surprising that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to agree on a programme of work during 1999. Those who have most loudly bemoaned the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations must look within themselves, for the fault may be there. It was the opposition of a few to any negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on nuclear disarmament and on outer space which prevented the Conference from achieving consensus on its work programme. But some progress, however halting, was made during the year. If the principles of balance and equity are accepted, the Conference on Disarmament could achieve early agreement on a work programme in 2000.

Now, more than ever, it is essential to open multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament and on preventing an arms race in outer space.

We do not share the view expressed in this debate by one representative that mankind has come to accept the five nuclear Powers as an undeniable and irreversible fact of history. On the contrary, this grossly discriminatory situation — which has existed for less than 30 years — is but a small episode in history, which should be reversed if mankind is to have the assurance of survival. If facts are accepted, let us then accept the fact that today there are not five, but at least eight, nuclear Powers and at least a dozen other States which could quickly develop nuclear weapons if they felt compelled to do so.

Progress in nuclear disarmament is essential to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The resistance of some nuclear Powers to allowing negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament compromises their political and moral credentials to promote non-proliferation.

Pakistan has agreed to commence negotiations on a fissile materials treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, while reserving its right to secure a solution to the problem of unequal stocks in the course of the negotiations. Yet this is not the only issue in the nuclear field on which the Conference on Disarmament can undertake negotiations. Notwithstanding the scepticism of some, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament could undertake negotiations on several important aspects of nuclear disarmament, including a convention committing States to the early abolition of nuclear weapons and a programme for the progressive reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

Agreement within the Conference on Disarmament to open negotiations on nuclear disarmament would: one, affirm the sincerity of the nuclear-weapon States over the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons; two, help to overcome the impasse which has been created in the bilateral START negotiations; three, enable negotiations to take place among all the States which actually possess nuclear weapons or have the capability to

manufacture them at short notice; four, facilitate the commencement and early conclusion of other disarmament instruments; five, help to prevent a major nuclear-arms build-up by the new nuclear States; and, six, contribute to the credibility of efforts to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons.

It is equally important for the Conference on Disarmament to be enabled to open negotiations on the agenda item relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The 1967 Outer Space Exploration Treaty had declared, in article I, that outer space "shall be the province of all mankind." This province of mankind is today under the threat of being transformed into yet another arena for military competition. The ABM Treaty, which has until now had a crucial restraining effect on the otherwise irrational nuclear arms race between the two nuclear super-Powers, faces an uncertain future. Moreover, national missile defences and theatre missile defences (TMD) are planned to be established in several sensitive regions of the world.

The Chairman returned to the Chair.

The militarization of outer space and the emplacement of theatre missile defence (TMD) systems could give rise to at least three major concerns.

First, the militarization of outer space is likely to be perceived as being designed to achieve global domination and thus provoke new strategic rivalry among the major Powers. In this context, we must be concerned that some self-styled stewards of military space say they are seeking to dominate the space dimension of military operations and to integrate space forces into war-fighting capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict. Some responsible officials have even declared that "We have signed no treaty saying we would not weaponize space".

Second, the emplacement of TMD systems, with or without integrating them with systems deployed in space, could provide one side with a quantum military advantage over potential adversaries. These adversaries, in response, are likely to enlarge and to improve their nuclear delivery systems. Nuclear stability would be seriously eroded. Whether space is exploited to support the creation of defensive shields against missile attacks or used for deployment of weapons which aim at ground targets, the fundamental strategic balances between the major Powers will be severely disturbed. The result will be an arms race in outer space and, most likely, a new nuclear arms race on earth.

The revision or abrogation of the ABM Treaty would obviously impinge on the START process. It would also erode global confidence in the permanence of solemn commitments for nuclear and arms restraint accepted and sanctified in legally binding treaties and commitments. There could be unforeseen consequences even for the CTBT and the fissile materials treaty.

Third, the legitimization of missile defence systems by one or more of the major Powers could have serious consequences for regional security as well, including in a nuclearized South Asia. The acquisition and deployment of missile defences by either side in South Asia would destabilize deterrence and escalate reliance on offensive systems, especially missiles. Even worse, it could place a premium on first-strike postures.

As a natural corollary to the Charter commitment against the use or threat of use of force, the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be prohibited. Non-nuclear-weapon States are entitled to receive legally binding assurances from nuclear Powers against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In the new environment created by South Asia's nuclearization, the Conference on Disarmament's task of evolving an agreed approach on negative security assurances has become more challenging and urgent.

Our endeavour of 25 years to promote a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia was, sadly, subverted last year by our neighbour's nuclear tests and assumption of nuclear-weapon status. But Pakistan continues to support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various other parts of the world. We are prepared to extend appropriate assurances, if desired by the regional States, to respect the nuclear-weapon-free status of various nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as in Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia. Pakistan will support the creation of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and also continue to participate actively in the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia initiated by President Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan.

Pakistan has participated actively in the Ad Hoc Group which is conducting negotiations to evolve a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). These negotiations are at a fairly advanced stage. However, some difficult issues remain outstanding. These can be addressed if necessary in focused deliberations and resolved through strict adherence to the rule of consensus. The Ad Hoc Group's mandate must be implemented fully. The BWC protocol should strengthen and fully implement article X of

the Convention regarding scientific and technological cooperation. And, once the protocol comes into force, there would be no justification to maintain ad hoc export control regimes.

Pakistan is committed to act with responsibility in relation to nuclear and other sensitive technologies and equipment. However, we cannot accept double standards or exclusivist regimes which seek to apply rules without our participation or consent, or which seek to deny Pakistan even the peaceful uses of the same technologies which we are asked not to transfer to others. Therefore, we are convinced that the aim of preventing the spread of sensitive technologies should be promoted through transparent multilaterally agreed arrangements which conform with international law.

While small arms kill people, it is the bigger arms which destabilize security relationships in volatile regions of the world and consume the largest resources for national defence. Ironically, some of those who advocate the control of small arms most vocally are the largest providers of the bigger and more advanced weapons. These States must ensure that large arms sales contracts do not exacerbate existing asymmetries and intensify the danger of, and damage caused by, conflicts. Of course, addressing the question of international arms transfers alone does not always contribute to enhanced security, since it excludes indigenous production from the equation. Pakistan believes that a regional approach offers the most effective framework to successfully negotiate agreements for conventional arms control.

The General Assembly has asked the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate principles for conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels — principles such as the principle of undiminished security of States and elaboration of the concept of sufficiency in armaments. The adoption of such principles can make a useful contribution to specific negotiations for conventional arms control in various regions of the world. In addition, the Conference on Disarmament could take up other important facets of conventional arms issues, such as the question of new military technologies and their impact on international security and the global imbalance in possession of conventional arms and technologies between different groups of States.

We agree that small arms should be better controlled, since they fuel conflicts in so many regions of the world. This should not deflect attention from the fact that it is even more important to resolve the underlying causes of the conflicts; not compromise the right of States, especially the smaller States, to exercise the right to self-defence; and not compromise the right of peoples struggling against foreign occupation or for their legitimate right to self-determination.

The approach to this issue has been rather disparate so far, evidenced in the past by endeavours to mechanically apply approaches and experiences of particular countries or regions to other, different situations and societies. Nevertheless, Pakistan will support endeavours to regulate and control small arms, in particular the illicit trade in such arms.

Pakistan welcomes the decision to convene an international conference not later than 2001 on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects. In order to make that conference a success, we feel, it should be preceded by a robust preparatory process. In this regard, we share the view that the preparatory committee to be established by the General Assembly should be mandated to decide on the scope, agenda and objectives of the conference.

Pakistan welcomes the growing international concerns about misery and destruction caused by the indiscriminate use of landmines. However, global conferences and landmine treaties which draw so much media focus should not deflect attention from the need for a greater commitment of resources to actual demining operations in the countries afflicted by this problem. These resources have not increased in proportion to the media attention paid to conferences and meetings. Pakistan has been actively involved in demining operations all over the world. Our active participation in the demining operations in Kuwait, Cambodia, Angola, Eastern Slovenia and Western Sahara reflects Pakistan's commitment to the international efforts to deal with the menace caused by the indiscriminate use of landmines.

Pakistan has acceded to the amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) on landmines. We have imposed a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. We look forward to participating in the First Annual Conference of the States parties to Protocol II, to be held in Geneva in December this year. Pakistan will shortly submit its report to the Conference on various aspects of the Protocol's implementation.

Pakistan's policies on disarmament are inevitably interlinked with its priority objective of promoting peace, security and stability in South Asia. Addressing the

Pakistani nation on 17 October, the Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf, stated:

> "Pakistan has always been alive to international non-proliferation concerns. Last year, we were compelled to respond to India's nuclear tests in order to restore strategic balance in the interest of our national security and regional peace and stability. In the new nuclear environment in South Asia, we believe that both Pakistan and India have to exercise utmost restraint and responsibility. We owe it to our people and also to the world. I wish to assure the world community that while preserving its vital security interests Pakistan will continue to pursue a policy of nuclear and missile restraint and sensitivity to global non-proliferation and disarmament objectives."

In this context, let me add that there is no change in Pakistan's positive approach to the CTBT. We need an atmosphere free of coercion. Sanctions and pressure are not only unacceptable, they are counter-productive. Their continuation does not convey a sense of equity nor inspire confidence or cooperation.

The summary judgement expressed from afar under the nuclear umbrella by the representative of Canada about the internal change in Pakistan, reveals naïvety and ignorance, if not arrogance. Far from being an element of instability, the peaceful change in Pakistan is designed precisely to ensure stability. This change has been visibly and widely welcomed by the people of Pakistan, reflecting disappointment with past experience and the desire for good governance and clean administration, which are essential for stability, economic revival, national integration and genuine democracy. At the very least, we would hope that our friends would allow the new Administration in Pakistan the opportunity to establish its credentials and its sincerity, rather than rushing to judgement like the representative of Canada. We must confess that the *Toronto Star* has displayed a keener perception than the Canadian delegation.

If Canada were genuinely concerned about instability in South Asia it could not have lately ignored the announced plans for the operational deployment of nuclear weapons by our neighbour. And historically Canada could have prevented instability and non-proliferation in South Asia if it had heeded Pakistan's warnings in the 1960s not to sell the CIRRUS reactor to India without safeguards. It was that Canadian action which initiated proliferation in South Asia. One would have wished to see some sense of responsibility in Canada's proselytization, but perhaps it is too much to hope when democracies transform themselves into hypocrisies.

Pakistan seeks with India a relationship of peace, dignity and justice, and we will work for the genuine resolution of outstanding differences and disputes, including the Kashmir dispute, on the basis of the Security Council resolutions. We are prepared for resumption, without preconditions, of the structured dialogue with India to resolve all outstanding issues, in particular, the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. On 17 October General Musharraf stated:

> "While our armed forces are fully equipped and ready to defend our national sovereignty and territorial integrity, it is our desire that the situation on our borders with India and on the Line of Control should remain calm and peaceful. I take this opportunity to announce a unilateral military de-escalation on our international borders with India and initiate the return of all our forces moved to the borders in the recent past. I hope this step will serve as a meaningful confidence-building measure."

We hope that this confidence-building measure will be reciprocated. Such measures could be complemented by additional steps to build mutual trust and confidence.

Pakistan has proposed to India a strategic restraint regime covering mutual nuclear and conventional arms restraint, as well as the resolution of differences and disputes. We are deeply concerned by the announcement of the Indian draft nuclear doctrine, which envisages the operational deployment of a large arsenal of air-, land- and sea-based nuclear weapons, as well as the acquisition of massive and lethal conventional armaments. If Pakistan and other concerned States are not to act on the basis of worst-case assumptions, India will need to provide assurances that it disavows the draft nuclear doctrine, that it will not operationally deploy nuclear weapons, and that it will refrain from acquiring ABM systems and other advanced and destabilizing conventional weapons.

Despite the dismal picture which the disarmament process presents today, the world cannot afford the luxury of defeat in this endeavour. The disarray in the disarmament agenda, the double standards applied in its promotion, and the dysfunctionality of disarmament institutions, are all the outcome, not only of the asymmetries in power, but equally of the absence of an agreed framework. Eminent personalities have assembled to prescribe new disarmament dispensations. We are

disappointed by the report of the Tokyo Forum, which has generally endorsed the received wisdom propagated by the powerful and privileged. It has even stepped back from the more robust and equitable recommendations issued three years ago by the Canberra Commission.

The wisdom of a few experienced personalities, however, should not serve to overshadow or compromise the framework of disarmament adopted by consensus at the General Assembly's first special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD I), held in 1978. The Programme of Action of SSOD I

> "enumerates the specific measures of disarmament which should be implemented over the next few years". (*resolution S-10/2, para.44*)

These "specific measures" envisaged simultaneous progress towards nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, together with conventional arms control and disarmament pursued at the bilateral, regional and global levels. Today, as we witness the disarray in disarmament, it has become imperative for the international community to translate the principles, objectives and specific measures adopted at SSOD I into an operational strategy for disarmament. This should be the primary task of the Assembly's fourth special session devoted to disarmament.

The quest for disarmament stands at an important crossroads today. We can surrender to the powerful forces that would separate the world into those who are completely secure and those who are completely insecure. Or we can revive the search for equal and collective security for all States based on the principles of the United Nations Charter. Seen in this perspective, the choice is clear and simple.

Ms. Arce de Jeannet (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As the Committee is aware, the Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, has returned to his capital at the end of his mission in New York. As a Vice-Chairman, at the request of the Bureau, I have the honour to introduce the report (A/54/42) of the Commission on its 1999 substantive session.

As in recent years, the report consists of four chapters and several annexes, reflecting the results of the deliberations on the three substantive agenda items for the 1999 substantive session.

The first three chapters deal with, respectively, the introduction, organizational matters and documentation. Chapter IV contains the conclusions and recommendations.

The annexes include the two consensus texts on the Commission's agenda item 4, "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned", and agenda item 6, "Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N". In addition, they include the document presented by the Chairman of the Working Group dealing with consideration of agenda item 5, "Fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament".

The Disarmament Commission organized its 1999 substantive session in accordance with the mandate set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978; with the "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", adopted in 1990; and with decision 52/492, on the rationalization of the work of the Disarmament Commission, adopted in September 1998 at the resumed session of the First Committee.

In accordance with the latter decision, as of 2000 the Disarmament Commission will have two substantive items on its agenda, including one on nuclear disarmament. The Commission may add a third item if there is a consensus to adopt it.

The consideration of agenda item 4 clearly showed that it was a timely decision to include the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission. In spite of the very intense discussion on the relationship between nuclear-weapon-free zones and other regional security agreements, on obligations of States outside the zones and on the geographical definition and scope of the zones, member States were in the end able to adopt a consensus text reconciling their different national security considerations. This document underscores the readiness of member States to display a high level of cooperation in strengthening the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and in establishing new zones as effective non-proliferation measures in the framework of the nuclear disarmament process.

As for agenda item 6, on practical disarmament measures, the discussions were concluded successfully. The

revised draft of the paper submitted by the Chairman of the Working Group was adopted after all the parties had agreed to a compromise solution, setting aside different proposals that had the support of some delegations or of a group of delegations. The adoption of the text is a positive fact in itself, since it provides the international community with a set of guidelines on practical disarmament measures in post-conflict situations.

Nonetheless, the success achieved in those two Working Groups was not repeated in the Working Group dealing with agenda item 5, "Fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". It must be made clear that delegations showed flexibility compared with the discussions in past years. They worked with a view to reaching an agreement that would make it possible to adopt the Chairman's paper as a compromise formula, but as the debate progressed the differences between positions remained unchanged, instead of narrowing.

The inability to reach an agreement to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, after four years of deliberation, is also a reflection of the differences of opinion regarding the future of disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, and the means to achieve it. It is also a symptom of the generally unfavourable international climate. Despite all that, we hope that the long-term repercussions of this lack of agreement will not be negative for the Disarmament Commission and for the international community as a whole, especially since the Commission, as a deliberative and decision-making body, did outstanding work on the other two substantive items on its 1999 agenda.

As I have already mentioned, as of next year the Disarmament Commission will have two substantive items on its agenda. In this respect, at the request of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, together with the other members of the Bureau I have begun the process of informal consultations with delegations regarding the two items that might be included on the Commission's agenda for its substantive session in 2000. I hope to have the active participation and contributions of delegations.

Lastly, I wish once again to express my thanks to all delegations for their understanding and support. Special appreciation is owed to the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for the splendid way in which he guided our work, as well as to the three Chairmen of the Working Groups, who carried out their tasks in an imaginative and creative way.

I also wish to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jin Yongjian, to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, to the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Conference Services for their valuable assistance, and to the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Timur Alasaniya, as well as his colleagues who served as secretaries of the Working Groups. On behalf of the Commission, I express our sincerest thanks to all the members of the Secretariat who helped the Commission to carry out its work.

With these comments, I introduce the annual report of the Disarmament Commission, contained in document A/54/42.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset let me extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am sure that with your diplomatic skill and experience this important Committee will achieve the best possible results. I also take this opportunity to warmly congratulate the other members of the Bureau as well.

We are on the threshold of a new century, a century with new hopes and expectations, hopes for a better life and for a world free from poverty, insecurity and, more important, free from the scourge of war. Disarmament and arms control are therefore a common and shared objective for years to come.

Drastic changes have occurred in international relations, particularly in the last decade of the twentieth century. The termination of the cold war and super-Power rivalry now require a different security posture based on new military doctrines. A different agenda based on new realities should therefore be drafted.

We therefore strongly believe that convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) is a real necessity for updating the only disarmament charter, which was adopted back in 1978, a year clearly different from the year 2000. It is regrettable that after three years of deliberation on SSOD-IV the United Nations Disarmament Commission was unable to reach a consensus on different aspects of the conference. We hope that the First Committee at this session will address the issue and consider ways to materialize such a worthy goal.

On the threshold of the new century, progress has, fortunately, been registered in some areas of arms control

and disarmament. The prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, which are among the greatest threats to international peace and security, is now considered a priority.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which was concluded following 25 years of negotiations, is undergoing smooth implementation. Bearing in mind the complexity of the Convention itself and the technical difficulties in the way of its implementation, we should extend our sincere gratitude to Mr. Bustani, Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and his staff for their tireless efforts. We hope that we will be able to realize the timetables envisaged in the Convention for eradicating and destroying all existing chemical weapons stockpiles, so that the new century will be from its beginning a century free from chemical weapons.

Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has also been pursued vigorously in the 1990s, particularly since 1994, with the commencement of negotiations on drafting a legally binding verification protocol. The text of such a draft is now well developed, and we hope that the protocol will be concluded in early 2000. This requires, of course, hard work, cooperation and flexibility by all sides in order to resolve outstanding and key issues. Striking a balance between disarmament and technological cooperation aspects of the protocol is among the issues which deserve our attention and full consideration.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention protocol, once concluded, are unprecedented in scope and provide enough assurances that any possible violation of the provisions of the Convention and the protocol will be effectively verified. The two instruments cover all related chemical and biological industries worldwide and put them under close scrutiny.

Despite the progress on the prohibition of these two classes of weapons of mass destruction, no tangible achievement has been made with regard to nuclear weapons, and even the modest achievements made in the past have now been put in limbo.

What raises more scepticism and anxiety is the maintenance and even reaffirmation of the military doctrine of nuclear deterrence by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The international community has come out strongly and swiftly against the recent NATO communiqué in Washington, which stressed the importance of nuclear-weapon security doctrines. That communiqué in real terms contradicted the expectation of the international community that, following the end of the cold war and super-Power rivalry, reliance on nuclear weapons would vanish. Still we hope that NATO members, in their efforts to define the new strategy in the first decades of the new century, will review and revisit such a policy and envisage a different security perspective which will consider the realities in their global context. In this connection, we should consider the consequences if other countries and new pacts opt for the same doctrine and revive the quest to develop nuclear weapons, with the result that the arms race would be restarted.

The situation in South Asia is alarming in this respect. The South Asian trend has not only called into question the credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but also seriously challenged the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). New and serious endeavours on the part of each and every one of us are needed to maintain the credibility of these two important instruments.

Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament should now be seen as the real top priority on our agenda. We believe that the following points should be seriously considered in order to alleviate the concerns and provide the necessary grounds for preventing a catastrophe in the nuclear area.

First, nuclear disarmament should be pursued at the bilateral and multilateral levels. At the multilateral level, the Conference on Disarmament should be mandated to start at least some level of negotiation at its next session. We appreciate the sincere efforts by delegations from different quarters to provide a more realistic approach to this issue. Nuclear-weapon States should certainly show more flexibility in allowing these negotiations to commence at the Conference.

Second, the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is expected to contribute to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The FMCT negotiations, delayed for a long time, need to be started. The Conference on Disarmament, which has twice established an ad hoc committee on the FMCT, should not, hopefully, be entangled in procedural discussions on the establishment of this ad hoc committee at its next session, and should engage in substantive negotiations on the FMCT beginning in January 2000.

Third, the NPT 2000 Review Conference should agree on an updated "principles and objectives" declaration, in

addition to a substantive backward-looking document on the Treaty's implementation. Failure to achieve any of these goals in 2000 would be another setback for the non-proliferation regime at this very critical juncture. We wish Ambassador Seleby, President of the Conference, all success, and request him to start his consultations on outstanding key points in the Preparatory Committee. Unfortunately, the Preparatory Committee did not succeed in making recommendations to the Review Conference about the substantive issues, as its mandate required. Time is therefore short, and prior consultations would be helpful in mapping the long road in front of us.

Fourth, the recent developments in the United States are a real setback for the CTBT, which, if not revisited and reversed, could jeopardize the ratification process in other nuclear and even non-nuclear-weapon States. Notwithstanding this negative development, we believe that the international community should spare no effort to overcome this challenge, make every possible effort to uphold the integrity of the CTBT and work together to prepare the ground for the CTBT to enter into force.

Fifth, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in the Middle East, is one of the main and necessary elements for the success of nuclear non-proliferation. By pursuing a clandestine nuclear-weapons programme, Israel has endangered peace and security in the region. Israel should be kept under pressure to forgo its nuclear policy and to respond to the international call to abandon its nuclear-weapons programme and to place all its nuclear installations under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Another area of recent concern is missiles. The development of missiles beyond necessary national defence could destabilize regional and international security. The missile issue, however, is very complex, and before any approach is initiated at the regional or international level a comprehensive study needs to be carried out by a competent body. Such a study, which can be initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, should sufficiently cover the question of missiles in all its aspects and identify the key issues for further consideration.

Due to the importance of the question, my delegation has developed some elements for a draft resolution on this issue, and following consultations with other delegations will consider presenting it formally. We hope that this will be a first step in the right direction as we develop our approach in the United Nations to the sensitive and important question of missiles.

On micro-disarmament, we are satisfied that the Group of Governmental Experts worked with the Secretary-General on finalizing the second report (A/54/258) on small arms. That report contains recommendations to be implemented by the United Nations, international and regional organizations as well as individual States for the purpose of combating and preventing the excessive accumulation of small arms in regional conflicts, which are responsible for the death and injury of thousands of innocent people. The decision of the General Assembly to hold an international conference in 2001 will provide a suitable opportunity for Member States to consider ways and means of preventing and combating illicit trafficking in small arms.

Fortunately, Member States responded in an unprecedented manner to the Secretariat letter requesting comments on different aspects of the international conference. That a large number of Member States responded to the letter manifests in and of itself the interest of Member States and their determination to address this problem. These responses and the recommendations of the Group of Experts provide a good point of departure for organizing the conference.

Ms. Junod (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) (*spoke in French*): The global proliferation and widespread abuse of weapons of war is one of the major issues of our times. This issue presents an enormous challenge to the ICRC, whose mission it is to promote respect for international humanitarian law and to assist victims of armed conflict. I should like to underscore the fact that this mission is being undermined today by the uncontrolled spread and undisciplined use of weapons — small arms and light weapons in particular.

In view of the high number of civilian casualties claimed by recent conflicts, the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in 1995, called upon the ICRC

> "to examine, on the basis of firsthand information available to it, the extent to which the availability of weapons is contributing to the proliferation and aggravation of violations of humanitarian law in armed conflicts and the deterioration of the situation of civilians."

The ICRC's observations and recommendations on this subject have now been consolidated in a recently published study entitled "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict". To our knowledge, this is the

first time that an international humanitarian organization has attempted to systematically and rigorously document the human costs of arms availability, based upon its own experience in the field.

The ICRC study shows a strong link between high levels of arms availability and high levels of civilian casualties — both during and after periods of conflict. In a region of Afghanistan, for example, where interfactional fighting had ended but people had not been disarmed, the number of injuries caused by weapons was found to have decreased only slightly. In north-western Cambodia the prevalence of such injuries actually grew after the departure of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which had experienced difficulties in meeting its disarmament objectives. The study also revealed that inappropriate use of mortars and artillery accounted for the majority of civilian casualties suffered during interfactional clashes. In social violence more generally, intentional wounds inflicted with assault rifles were by far the most frequently observed type of injury. These findings suggest the need for a much more nuanced approach by those who wish to prevent such tragedies. Furthermore, experienced ICRC delegates overwhelmingly agree that in conflict situations assault rifles appear to be the primary instrument of civilian death and injury.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to highlight some of the other conclusions of our study.

First, the study confirms that civilian casualties represent a substantial proportion of all people injured by weapons. Moreover, disease, starvation and ill-treatment of civilians increase when humanitarian agencies, including the ICRC, are directly attacked and must suspend operations or leave a country. Suffering can go on, often for years after a conflict has ended, as the availability of arms undermines the rule of law, hampers efforts at reconciliation among former warring parties and contributes to a "culture of violence".

Secondly, as international arms transfers, particularly of small arms and light weapons, have become easier, promoting respect for humanitarian law has become vastly more difficult. The proliferation of weapons in the hands of new, and often undisciplined, users has outpaced efforts to ensure compliance with the basic rules of war.

Thirdly, while recognizing that the primary responsibility for compliance with humanitarian law lies with users of weapons, the study stresses that States and enterprises involved in production and export bear a degree of political, moral and, in some cases, legal responsibility towards the international community for the use made of their weapons and ammunition. The ICRC therefore calls on States to urgently review their policies concerning the production, availability and transfer of arms and ammunition in the light of their responsibility to respect and ensure respect for humanitarian law. We also urge States to include criteria based on the likelihood of humanitarian law being respected when devising their national policies and making decisions on arms transfers and related international codes of conduct.

One of the weapons whose proliferation and abuse has caused untold suffering in this decade is the landmine. The huge, costly and long-term effort required to address the damage caused by these weapons is reason enough to prevent the proliferation of other weapons — particularly among those unwilling or unable to respect the rules of war. We welcome the entry into force this year of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, signed in Ottawa, and the establishment by the States parties in Maputo of an inter-sessional mechanism to support the long and arduous task of implementing its provisions. The ICRC calls on all States to adhere to the Treaty without delay. At the end of this month the entire International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement will adopt its own long-term strategy for responding to the global epidemic of landmine injuries, including efforts in the areas of victim assistance, mine awareness and advocacy.

The ICRC also considers that the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has an important role to play in limiting the use of all landmines and in prohibiting other particularly abhorrent weapons, such as blinding lasers. The first annual meeting, in December 1999, of the States parties to amended Protocol II, on landmines, and the preparatory process to begin next year for the 2001 CCW Review Conference will be important opportunities to evaluate the implementation of Protocol II and to address the unfinished business of the 1996 Review Conference, particularly the problems posed by anti-vehicle mines. The ICRC strongly urges States which are not yet parties to this important international instrument to adhere to the Convention and its four protocols in the coming year. We are particularly concerned that more than three years after the adoption of amended Protocol II and the new Protocol IV, on blinding laser weapons, there are only about 40 States parties to them — despite the fact that both were adopted by consensus. Therefore, we see no reason why they should not rapidly become universal.

In preparation for the upcoming 2001 CCW Review Conference, the ICRC intends to host a meeting of governmental and other experts in the second quarter of next year to consider a comprehensive approach to the serious humanitarian problems created by unexploded remnants of war, including anti-vehicle mines, cluster bombs and other munitions. We will also promote an extension of the scope of the CCW so that it applies in internal armed conflicts as well.

In addition to the development of new norms, the ICRC is concerned with the faithful application of existing humanitarian law governing the use of weapons. In recent years our medical personnel, together with a wide range of military and civilian medical professionals, have developed a tool to assist States in fulfilling their obligation to assess the legality of weapons before their deployment — article 36 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions. The SIrUS Project, now endorsed by 15 national medical associations, collects hospital and casualty data on injuries sustained in conflicts over the past 50 years in order to identify and quantify the types of injuries and suffering resulting from the use of weapons in conflict situations. The ICRC has proposed that the data on injuries caused by weapons gathered by the project be taken into account in determining which weapons may cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering — from which the term "SIrUS" is derived. Under existing law, all new weapons must be reviewed to establish whether by their nature or design they inflict such injury. The ICRC considers that the information provided by the SIrUS Project provides a tool for more objective discussion and decision-making regarding new weapons. It does so by pinpointing the injuries which have most often been sustained in conflicts over the past few decades and those which have been relatively rare. But it does not give a definition of the notion of superfluous injury.

The 1868 St. Petersburg Declaration prohibited the use of explosive bullets in order to protect soldiers from suffering which serves no military purpose and is therefore contrary to the laws of humanity. It is disturbing to learn that in recent years bullets capable of exploding on impact with a human body have been produced, sold and used. In early 1999 the ICRC hosted a meeting of technical and legal governmental experts, who reaffirmed that the proliferation of such bullets is a serious problem and undermines the very purpose of the St. Petersburg Declaration. We urge all States to refrain from the production and export of such bullets and urge those that possess them to strictly prohibit their use against persons, a practice which violates existing law. The ICRC expects to report on this problem and seek appropriate action during the 2001 CCW Review Conference.

Recent reports, including a report published by the British Medical Association early this year, have highlighted the potential for abuse of the remarkable and rapid advances in the fields of microbiology, genetic engineering and biotechnology. Exploiting such advances for hostile purposes would clearly violate both ancient taboos and twentieth century legal prohibitions on the use of biological weapons. But if existing norms are to be maintained an effective monitoring regime is urgently needed to help ensure that knowledge in these fields, which should benefit humanity, is not turned against it. Unfortunately, time is not on our side. The observance next year of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, and of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological)and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction must be marked by concrete action to ensure that the scourge of biological warfare is never unleashed. The ICRC calls on States to spare no effort in concluding negotiations next year on an effective monitoring regime for the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I have received requests from delegations to speak in exercise of the right of reply, but in view of the late hour I request them to postpone their statements until tomorrow.

Organization of work

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): As we have concluded the general debate, in accordance with the adopted programme of work, during the next eight meetings, starting tomorrow, 21 October 1999, the Committee will carry out its second stage of work: thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85.

At this stage of the Committee's work the programme is rather flexible, in accordance with the adopted decision on rationalization of work of the Committee. This does not mean that statements made during the general debate need to be repeated; to the contrary, statements need to be more focused.

In other words, with regard to flexibility, delegations are free to bring up any disarmament topics for discussion, dialogue or comments on specific issues or related events. Representatives may also introduce their respective draft resolutions already submitted and other representatives may proceed with comments on any submitted drafts. In order to organize the forthcoming meetings, delegations are requested to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers for specific meetings, if they are ready.

I would also remind delegations that draft resolutions under all disarmament and international security agenda items — that is, items 64, 65 and 67 to 85 — should be submitted to the secretariat by 6 p.m. on Friday, 22 October, without any extension, as agreed at the Committee's organizational meeting on 23 September.

The Committee will meet again tomorrow at 10 a.m. to begin the second stage of its work.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.